To whom it may concern,

It seems to me that the problem is that Microsoft is a monopoly in the operating system business. To solve this problem you have to come up with a solution that will allow competition back into the operating system market. Breaking Microsoft up doesn't solve this problem, and certainly still maintains the application barrier to entry, along with disrupting the companies ability to come out with new software products.

If a company could create an operating system that would provide the consumer some real advantage over Microsoft's operating system, and still allow the users of the operating system to continue using all the programs that the users is currently using, then this would be the optimum solution. Microsoft's software applications, like Microsoft Word, would still be purchased by users, allowing Microsoft to benefit from their software products, and still allow competition in the operating system business.

In order to understand my solution you should understand how a program works. When Microsoft writes applications like Microsoft Word, they do so by using the Win32 API. If the public had access and were given documentation on the specifics of this API, then you could implement the API on an operating system other than Microsoft Windows, and have all Windows operating system application software run on that operating system. IBM was doing this for their OS/2 operating system but gave up because Microsoft kept adding new API's and IBM couldn't keep up. Microsoft has always maintained that the Win32 API can not be licensed to anyone. If Microsoft were to license the Win32 API, then they would have an obligation to make sure that all licensees were informed when new API's were added, and provide support to customers trying to implement the Win32 API on a different operating system. Perhaps putting the Win32 API under public control, by making it a standard, would be the best solution of all. Then all public parties involved would be allowed the right to voice their opinions on new API's being added and the general direction of the standard. If the API were to be put under public control, then Microsoft would have to be ordered to implement the standard coming out of the public body controlling the standard. This is because, as with most standards, companies can pick and choose which API's to implement, and may even add new API's to their implementation of the standard, or may implement a part of the standard in a manner that is actually contrary to the standard. So in order to make sure that Microsoft doesn't fall back into a monopoly status in the operating system business, they could be ordered to implement the full standard for say, 10 years. After the 10 years they could be treated like any other company implementing the Win32 standard.

In that 10 year span, Microsoft could continue to innovate an release new software products to the public, the operating system business would be open to competition, and the application barrier to entry would be broken down. Business would actually have a choice when it came to an operating system, and they wouldn't have to worry about losing all the knowledge that their employees have gotten from using application software that was built on the Win32 API. For example, if a business were very concerned about security, and wanted to migrate to Linux because they felt that Linux provided them an advantage in regard to security over Microsoft Windows. Then they would only have to retrain their employees on how to use the new operating system, and not all the software applications that would be used on the new operating system.

This solution puts the operating system on the same playing field as all other software applications on the market today. If I don't like the digital camera software application that I'm using today, and a friend recommends a different software application, I can go and buy the other software application and use it, without fear of losing the ability of running my word processor software application.

Thanks for taking the time to read my comments, I hope that they were insightful and helpful.

-Frank Eaves